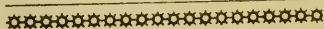


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# ILLINOIS PIONEER D A Y S



By  
ELBERT WALLER, A.M.

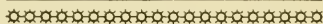
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TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF  
THE BRAVE PIONEERS WHO  
MADE THIS GREAT STATE  
POSSIBLE, THIS LITTLE BOOK  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDI-  
CATED.



NOV 18 1918

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## INTRODUCTION.

This is Illinois' Centennial Year, a time most fitting to look back down the years and think of the labors and sacrifices of those who came into a land of savages and transformed it into a land of the highest type of civilization. Much of the wonderful history of the brave pioneers of these mighty days is forever lost. With the idea of helping to preserve that yet known and transmit it to the rising generation, we are presenting this little volume. We offer no excuse and no other explanation for its publication. If those who read this book are led to a greater realization of the wonderful work of the pioneer men and women, it will have served its purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

THE AUTHOR.



A PRAIRIE SCHOONER.

## WHERE THE WEST BEGINS.

*Out where the hand clasps a little stronger,  
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,  
That's where the West begins.  
Out where the sun is a little brighter,  
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,  
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,  
That's where the West begins.*

*Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,  
Out where friendship's a little truer,  
That's where the West begins.  
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,  
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,  
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,  
That's where the West begins.*

*Out where the world is in the making,  
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,  
That's where the West begins.  
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,  
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,  
And a man makes friends without half trying,  
That's where the West begins.*  
(From "America," a pioneer pageant play.)

By R. H. Ward.



## PIONEER HOME LIFE.

When the pioneers came in search of new homes several families traveled together and they usually selected some well-wooded spot near some stream. When they were once located, no time was lost but all hands got busy. Often, by the first night, they had an improvised building in which the women and children were sheltered and in a few days they had houses for all and a nice little clearing around each.

The houses were usually about sixteen by twenty feet or hardly so large. The walls were of logs that ranged from eight to twelve inches in diameter. They were built in the form of a pen with notches in each log at the corners to make them lie solid and closer. Then pieces were sawed out of one side for the door. The frame of the roof was formed by shortening the logs at each end, thus necessitating bringing the logs of the sides closer together until the last one would form the comb of the roof. It was covered with clapboards, which were usually about four feet long, made from large trees and split with an instrument they call a frow (fro). The roof was sometimes nailed on, and at other times it was fastened on with poles laid crosswise of the boards. The floor, if they had any, was made of puncheons, which were timbers a foot

or more in diameter, cut into lengths of eight or ten feet, split open, and the flat side smoothed. They were sometimes laid flat on the ground and at other times they were notched at the ends and laid on cross logs called sleepers. The door was quite generally made of planks split out like the clapboards of the roof, which were then pegged to two cross-pieces, one end of each forming a hinge. The latch was on the inside and would drop into a notch in a peg and securely hold the door, but could be lifted from the outside by means of a string extending out thru a hole. If the "latch-string" was hanging out, people were welcome to lift the latch and come in. In one end there was a place about five feet square cut in the walls for a "fire-place," which consisted of three sides of a pen about three by five feet built in this opening to the top of it, attached to the sides by "notching in", then lined with stone and well plastered with mud. The fire-place terminated in a chimney which was built of sticks, then plastered with mud. This was the "stick-and-clay chimney." They had no glass for windows, so they just sawed out a piece of log and put a piece of greased paper in the opening.

The furniture was all home-made. The bed was formed as follows: They first took a pole long enough to extend from the floor to the roof, trimmed the limbs off, cutting each about six inches from the pole, so as to leave several hooks which might serve as a sort of clothes rack. This pole

was then set about four feet from one side at a back corner and six feet from the end. A pole was laid from a crack in the end to the first fork in this upright pole, about two feet high, and from that to the side wall, clapboards or something of the sort were laid across and the bedstead was made. On this they usually put a bed made of straw or corn husks, or even grass or leaves. In better days this was supplied with feathers. The table was a crude affair. They had no chairs but they made stools by boring three holes in a block of wood and putting pegs in for the legs. Sometimes they fixed up something like a puncheon with four legs as a bench for the children. They had no cook stove, but usually a large skillet with an iron lid was a substantial part of their equipment, tho they did not always have that. To do their baking, they made a heavy bed of coals on the hearth, set the skillet on them, put their food in, put the lid on, and then covered that with coals. Their light was usually a tallow candle, but sometimes they were not so fortunate as to have the tallow and they had to have a grease lamp. The dishes also were nearly always home-made wooden bowls and noggins. The more fortunate ones only had a few pewter dishes. Many had no knives or forks. If the former were lacking, the hunting knife was called into service, and if the latter a sharp stick answered the purpose. Clocks were very scarce. The old rooster would crow just as day began to dawn, so they

needed no alarm. They all learned to tell time pretty accurately by the sun, so what need had they for a clock? They had no matches. Sometimes they would start fire by striking a flint so as to throw the sparks on a piece of toe, but sometimes the toe was scarce and they would go a mile or more to a neighbor's to borrow fire. Many of them kept fire thru the winter and summer by keeping a log in the clearing burning.

The food was plain but very wholesome. The corn-pone and the johnny-cake were served for dinner. As hard as they worked they needed meat and very rarely were they without it. Sometimes it was venison. At other times it was turkey (wild) squirrel, rabbit, "possum" or "pattridge" (partridge or quail). Those who had cows furnished good sweet milk and buttermilk to everybody in the neighborhood. Mush and milk was the common supper dish, and if they got tired of that they could vary it with "hog and hominy". They drank much milk and during the spring months they drank sassafras tea. They raised beans and pumpkins in the corn. They made sugar and molasses from the sap of maple trees, and they often cut a bee-tree, getting sometimes several gallons of honey.

The majority of the pioneers were poor, but honest and respectable, hence poverty carried with it no sense of degradation or humiliation like that felt by the poor of our age. They lived in just

humble cabins, but they were their own, built by their own hands. They had few of the conveniences of modern life and they were destitute of many of the things we now consider absolutely necessary, but they were industrious, patient and cheerful and hopefully looked forward to better days. As noted above, they had plenty of food and it was wholesome. They had a good appetite and a clear conscience, and as they sat down to the rude table to eat from wooden or pewter dishes, they enjoyed it. The bread they ate was from corn they had both grown and ground, or it was made of wheat they had grown and by a very laborious process flailed out and ground ready for bread. Some of them had graters on which they grated their corn and wheat, but others had various forms of hand-mills. They walked the green carpet of the forests and fields around them, not with the mien of a vagrant, but with the independent air and elastic step of a self-respecting freeman.

In nothing have there been greater changes than in their dress. The women usually wore a home-made dress of what they called linsey-woolsey, but occasionally the more fortunate ones could get calico from "back east" and wear that on Sundays or on dress occasions. They wore hoops, which made the dress spread out at the bottom. Sometimes they had sleeves made very large and stuffed with feathers so that if the arms were extended at right angles to the body, the sleeves were about as

high as the head. When the boys used to hug the girls (and they say they did), they called it "squeezing the pillows." On their heads they wore sunbonnets in the summer and shawls in winter. If they didn't go barefooted they wore moccasins, which were made of a piece of deer-skin, which were laced along the back of the heel and the "calf" of the leg and also over the toes and instep up along the shin. The more artistic ones ran about a foot high and the tops were cut into strings, which were painted in various colors and allowed to dangle about the ankles. The girls often carried their moccasins to church, putting them on at the door. The men wore hunting shirts, breeches, moccasins and a cap. The hunting shirt was a loose sort of a blouse. It opened in front and was large enough to serve as a sort of pouch in which to carry lunch and other things necessary for the trip. It was usually belted down and in this belt he always carried a hunting-knife and sometimes a tomahawk. On dress occasions he wore a short cape over this coat, which terminated about his shoulders in a fringe of bright colors. His cap was made of coon-skin made so that the tail served as an ornament dangling from the top or down behind. His "breeches" were of buck-skin. In winter he wore the hairy side in and in summer he reversed it. On at least one occasion the "buck-skin breeches" served another purpose. Reverend James Lemen of Monroe County and his son were out

plowing and left their harness in the field at noon. The boy, hoping to get a vacation, hid one of the collars. The father was resourceful enough and at once took off his breeches, stuffed them with grass and this served as a collar for the afternoon.

They had plenty of work to do and if they got tired they worked at something else until they rested. The women had work around the house daubing the building, getting wood, grinding corn, cultivating the truck-patch, dressing skins and making it into clothing, or carding, weaving, and spinning cotton or wool and making that into clothing, knitting socks and stockings, milking the cow and teaching the children to read. When she got this done she went and piled brush or something of the kind until she rested, if she was tired. The men cleared the ground ready for crops, sometimes at the rate of ten or fifteen acres per year, by cutting down all the smaller trees and "dead-ening" the larger ones. They made rails and built a fence around the fields, then plowed the ground with a home-made plow and cultivated the crops. Besides all this, they must "all-hands" protect the chickens, geese, ducks, sheep and hogs against the opossums, raccoons, panthers, wild-cats, and wolves, and it often happened that they had to protect themselves against the Indians.

They were good at combining business with pleasure. In the spring they had log-rollings; which everybody—men, women and children—at-

tended. This was an occasion for everybody to help and it was a source of great pride to a man if he could pull all the others down at the end of a "hand-spike". The women took their spinning wheels along, and it was a great day for them as well. They had many amusements which were an essential part of their education. The boy soon passed the bow and arrow stage, and before he reached his teens he could handle the rifle well. They often had "shooting-matches," and they developed great skill in marksmanship. They learned the tricks of the animals and could imitate them all, from the "gobble" of a turkey to the howl of a wolf. They learned how to decoy the panther from his hiding place and how to call a deer by day or to "shine" him by night.

Boys went courting in those days. Among them there was no aristocracy, so there was but little looking for wealth or influence. They generally married young and started out in life for themselves. In those days you could tell when young people were going to get married by the way a young man tried to prepare a few home-made tools of his own and also by the fact that the girl was taking an additional interest in drying fruits, making quilts, etc. On the wedding day all the neighborhood was there. The ceremony was performed at noon and then came the big dinner. In some neighborhoods this was followed by dancing the "fox-trot" and the "country (contra) dance" un-



til daylight the next morning. The old fiddler was in the height of his glory. In other localities where they did not believe in dancing, they spent the afternoon in the various sports common to pioneer life, and departed to their homes before night only to assemble at the home of the father of the groom for an "infair" dinner the next day. Within the next week a place for the house was selected and the neighbors built a house for the new couple, and after a "house-warming" which consisted of an all-night party or dance, the young couple moved in and were "at home."

If any of them became sick, the good old mothers were the doctors. If they could not be cured, it was often ascribed to the ill-will of a witch. If they died, the preacher was there to say the last sad words at the grave. The neighbors were the undertakers.

*"Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.  
Their names, the years spelt by the unlettered muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply,  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die."*

As the years rolled on, fields were cleared up, the whip-saw and the saw-mill were introduced, better homes were built, churches were organized and schools were established. Various enterprises were

started up and people became specialists in different lines. The Indian and many of the wild animals disappeared. The pioneer doctor succeeded the old "witch-master" and the people generally led an easier life. In our imagination we can look back over half a century and, on a winter evening, see the old pioneer grandmother sitting by the huge fire-place, knitting away, while the children are gathered around a table and by the light of a tallow candle are studying their lessons, and the pioneer grandfather sits in meditative mood. Finally, when lessons are gotten the children call on Grandfather to tell them a story and out of the depth of his heart he tells them a story before they scamper off to bed to have a frightful dream about battles with the Indians or of the good times at some of their gatherings.

## A PIONEER CHURCH.

Among the first buildings to be erected in any frontier community was a "meeting house". It was often used as a home for women and children until the pioneer cabins could be built. It was then used for church, or as they generally called it, "meeting". In the same building they also had other community gatherings, even using it as a school house sometimes. They were never expensive and the church was never pressed for "offerings" or should I say, "collections"? They cared not for finery and the church was never financially embarrassed.

In the earlier days they were usually built of logs but sometimes of lumber sawed with a whip-saw or small saw-mill, operated by horse-power or a water wheel. All the labor was donated and they gladly gave it as a labor of love. Of course they gave the material also.

They were given such names as Mount Olive, Mount Pleasant, Mount Pisgah, Mount Moriah, Mount Nebo, Pleasant Grove, Bethel, New Jerusalem, Sharon, etc. Sometimes they were nicknamed by the irreverent and given such appellations as "God's Barn," "Board Shanty," and "Hell's Half Acre," and these names became more common than the real ones.

Old Sharon was a rural church located in a splendidly shaded grove. It was a fairly well constructed frame building about thirty by forty feet, and every piece was worked out by hand. Even the flooring, ceiling and weather-boarding were hand-dressed. The altar or pulpit, as it was called, was a good piece of architecture and was approached by "three upright regular steps".

The seats were common benches. The corner to the right of the preacher was called the "Amen Corner," and was reserved for the old men. If the old church were still standing, I could go back and hang my hat on the very nail on which my father used to hang his. For lack of a better name the opposite corner was nicknamed the "A Woman Corner" by some wag. On one side they had seats for the boys and men, and on the other they had seats for the girls and women, and let us say that this rule was sacredly adhered to. In one case a young man went in and sat down with his best girl. The preacher politely told him to move to the other side. He was reluctant but obeyed.

Let me digress here long enough to say that the boys seldom accompanied their girls to church, but often went home with them from the night service. Sometimes they had no previous arrangements and had some very ingenious ways of asking for the privilege of accompanying the girl home. A boy might say, "Do you love chicken?" and if she wished to give a favorable reply, she said, "Yes,

sir". He would then extend an arm and say, "Take a wing". Again he might say, "The moon shines bright, Can I go home with you tonight"? If favorable, the answer was, "The stars do too. I don't care if you do." Not every fellow of the crowd that stood in waiting at the door like a gang of unweaned calves was favorably considered and a negative answer was called a "sack". Most of the boys accepted that without a word and, greatly embarrassed, got out of the crowd as soon as they could, but others were "game" and gave rejoinders. Once at least this dialog took place:

Boy: "Can I see you home tonight?"

Girl: "No, sir."

Boy: "Give me a string."

Girl: "Ain't got any."

Boy: "Give me your garter, then. That will do."

I know the name of that youngster, but please ask me no questions, for I shall not tell. The law grants immunity from giving evidence against ourselves. Another boy wished to compromise the matter and said he wanted to go only as far as Uncle Mack's.

Of course, they had to be governed by the weather, but in the summer, in particular, the young men gathered in the grove and "swapped yarns" until some one in the house began a song which was the signal to come in for the services

to begin. Some of the young men would come in, but the rowdies stayed outside. The sermon was usually very long, the services often lasting from 11:00 o'clock until after 1:00 o'clock. Once a young fellow came out from town hoping to go home with one of the girls, and he tarried with the gang outside. If nothing else made him unpopular, the simple fact that he was wanting to pay his respects to one of the "country girls" would make him so, and he had to be the victim of all their jokes. He expressed a wonder at the length of the sermon and asked how long it lasted. They told him that it would last until time to go home and do up the chores late in the evening. He believed it and left just in time for some other fellow to get to go home with the girl.

They had no organ and no choir (war department of the church), but usually some old man with his coarse guttural voice, or a woman with her high-pitched nasal voice led the singing. There were few song books and the preacher would "line the hymns", that is, he would read a line or a stanza and then they would sing it, and thus on thru the song. In many churches there was, and in a few there is yet, a prejudice against any kind of musical instrument in the church, and it was so strong that some times it was a rock upon which the church was wrecked.

Sometimes they had revivals and while some preacher or layman would be praying, others would

be saying such things as "Lord grant it," "Yes, Lord," and "Amen," all in a groaning tone that people could hardly understand. I presume the Lord did. Once, while such a performance was going on a venerable, gray-haired brother was picking his nose and saying some of these things. It looked like he was taking on about his nose. Some boys saw it and laughed. One of the deacons reprimanded them. His attention was called to it and even he had to laugh.

The preacher was sometimes one of their number but usually he was some man with a great big heart and little ambition to accumulate money, and whose reputation as a preacher extended far beyond the confines of his own community. He was always reverent and sincere and his every word and act proved it. The best people of the community loved him and the others respected him. He always had the power to drive his message direct to his hearers. "A man he was to all the country dear," but he was not getting rich at forty pounds a year, for the collections were usually small.

*"But in his duty prompt at every call,  
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;  
And as a bird each fond endearment tries,  
To tempt its new-fledged off-spring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds and led the way.*

*"Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt and pain by turns dismayed,  
The reverend champion stood. At his control,*

*Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
And his last falt'ring accents whispered praise,*

*"At church with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place;  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal each honest rustic ran.*

*His ready smile, a parent's warmth expressed;  
Their welfare pleased him and their cares distressed;  
To them, his heart, his love, his grief were given.  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.*

*As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,  
Tho round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."*

I have described here my old home church. Of course, my experience does not date back to pioneer days, but many of the old customs still prevailed and I recall that my father and other old settlers told me many of the things that made the memory of the old church a sacred memory to them. This church was built about 1840, and destroyed by a cyclone in 1889. A new one was erected on the spot, but is now unused. I believe the rural church entered more into the social and religious life of the communities than did others. They have served their purpose and, having done so, are passing swiftly away.



## A PIONEER SCHOOL.

In pioneer days, as now, four things were essential to a good school. They were the material equipment, the parents, the children and the teacher.

The idea was not by any means general that the girls needed an education and, rough and rugged as the people were, they thought that any place was good enough for a school house. Sometimes it was an abandoned building. It may have been an old corn crib. In one instance, at least, it was an old stable. Little attention was paid to heat, light or ventilation. If they did not burn or freeze that was sufficient. They were not comfortably seated and no attention was paid to beautifying the school room or surroundings. Even a heating stove was a rare thing. Usually it was a fire-place where a pupil would roast one side, while the other was freezing. An opening made by cutting a log out of one side served as a window and when it was too cold, the window was either closed up entirely or at best it was covered with greased paper. Glass for windows was so rare that mention was made of one as the first and only one in the State having "real glass windows."

One of these schools which I think is a typical one, was held for many years in an old church

house. It was a frame building much larger than the average, possibly about thirty by forty feet. It stood on pillars. There was no underpinning and the hogs which were allowed to run at large often bedded under it. The noise they made furnished great amusement to the boys and girls. The floor was so open that the wind could whistle thru it. If a pencil were dropped it was sure to roll thru a crack and if a finger of boy or girl went up, it meant that the individual wanted to go out, crawl under the floor and get the lost pencil.

The seats were just long benches, sometimes arranged to face the fire-place or sometimes arranged in a square around the stove. The benches were often merely logs split open and pegs driven in the round side for legs. Four was the maximum number of desks they had, one for the large boys, one for the small boys and the same for the girls. They were, of course, home made. A blackboard possibly a yard square, made of plank was all they had and, as they thought, all they needed. One box of crayon would last several years. Instead of crayon they sometimes used a kind of clay they called kale. If they had a map of the United States and another of the hemispheres they thought themselves well supplied along that line.

Often the Bible was the only reader in school. They used the "Old Blue-backed Speller," written by Noah (Noah Webster). An advanced arithmetic was considered the most important of all.

It was a source of great pride to a boy to go thru the arithmetic, for his education was then completed. The teacher could not "learn" him anything more and he could quit school. As we say now, he graduated. There was no library in school and there were but few books in the community. In fact well-graded text-books did not exist.

The teacher taught them how to make pens of quills and ink of balls they got from small oak trees in the woods. He set the copy for them to write. Here is one of them, "Luck at the copy careful." You see, he had not mastered the spelling book and that he did not know by any means all about grammar. Tho "all declared how much he knew," it is evident that his scholarship would not pass muster now. They used slates and home-made soapstone (talc) pencils. The teacher "boarded round," i.e., the people took it turn about in boarding him. They paid so much per pupil or "scholar" as they called it. A little later, the "deestric" (district) school was organized by law and the teacher was paid partly out of public funds and finally all was paid that way.

The children liked to chew the corners of their books and to throw spit balls. Occasionally they became unruly and it resulted in a "free-for-all" bout, or sometimes it was "a fair field and no favours" between the teacher and the bully of the school. If the teacher whipped all was well and he was respected from then on, but if the boy came

out victorious he was a hero and the teacher left in disgrace. The boys often prided themselves on being able to take lots of punishment and saying that it never hurt. One of their favorite sports was "lap-jacket." In this the boys would get the best switches they could, two would join left hands and whip each other with these switches. The one who flinched first was, of course, the loser and was laughed at by all the crowd. The victor must then go thru the same ordeal with some one else who was sure to challenge his championship.

In one instance a "gum-wax" (sweet gum) tree stood about a quarter of a mile from the building and at noon many of the boys and girls, all of whom took their dinners, would rush to their baskets, grab their hands full of food and make a "bee line" for this tree, and they stood around it like "coon dogs" around a "coon tree". Each would pick away at the wax, putting each little particle into his mouth until he had a good "chaw" (chew). Then he would give up his place and go away to trade his wax out of his mouth to some one who was not fortunate enough to get to the tree. They were not altogether selfish. Sometimes the big boys would gather a good "chaw" and give it to the big girls, receiving in return a pleasant smile. At other times they would lend their wax. It was common to hear some little one begging:

"Let me chaw yer wax till recess."

"Boo! boo!" said a little fellow.

"What is the matter now?" said the teacher.

"I swallowed my wax," said the little fellow.

"It won't hurt you," said the teacher.

"But I borrowed it from Bill and he'll lick me at recess," said the little fellow.

In the school room, then, good discipline did not always consist in keeping quiet, but sometimes it was in keeping noisy. To be sure they studied, the teacher required them to study aloud and if it became too quiet the teacher would say, "Spell out, spell out!" On Friday afternoons they often had spelling matches, where they chose sides and spelled down or it might be a "program," as they called it, which consisted of "saying pieces" gotten "by heart" from some old book. Sometimes on Friday nights they had a spelling match between different schools or possibly they had a debate in which the older people took great interest. All these things were important factors in the education of the people at that time.

In the earlier days, the teacher was always a man and he had to be a man, physically, but conditions changed and many ladies were employed. Most of them had high ideals and their "boarding round" served a good purpose in educating the parents also and in securing interest in the school and community interests in general. The memory of the pioneer teacher was a sacred memory to the children of the pioneers. They served well their generation and did their part of the work toward the evolution of man as man shall be when time shall be no more.

## THE PIONEER MOTHER.

To all those who have builded well, we give our meed of praise, but especially do we wish to honor the pioneer mother who left the comforts of the old home "back East" and took up the painful and dangerous journey to the woodlands and the prairies of the "Illinois Country," and made possible, this great commonwealth.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way," and with this westward trend of civilization, came the pioneer mother who turned her tear-dimmed eyes from all that civilization then afforded, from all that was dear to her—father, mother, sisters, playmates—and all the haunts of her early childhood. All these she left, knowing the indomitable spirit of herself and her husband and, trusting in God, bidding farewell to all these things of sacred and hallowed memories, she looks hopefully to the West.

They were the best of the best, many of them descendants of Puritan or Cavalier. They sought not freedom to worship God, for that their grandfathers and grandmothers had secured. They sought not political liberty, for that their mothers and fathers had secured. They sought not "Bright jewels of the mine," but they sought opportunities to build homes, where what they earned would be their own.

They came from all the conveniences of the age, not to fields waving with golden grain nor to cities of churches, schools and factories, but they came to a wilderness filled with wild animals and wilder men, "away out west," where every vision was new and where the heart ached for a familiar voice or a familiar scene.

The pioneer mother has come and gone, but she did not live in vain. She did her part of the work toward the evolution of man as man shall be when time shall be no more. Verily, "Their works do live after them". Because the pioneers did their duty in the days that were dark and terrible and splendid, there has been a great transformation. Forests have been cleared away, the sod of the prairies has been broken up. The wild animals have disappeared. The Indian is no longer here to use his tomahawk and scalping knife, but he too, has taken up his slow and painful journey toward the setting sun. In the place of all these are pleasant farm homes where in season can be seen the broad expanse of fields waving with golden grain. Churches dot the land, lifting their spires toward Heaven, showing that the people have faith in the God their fathers and mothers so nobly served. No less conspicuous are the common schools dedicated to the education of the masses. Great cities have been built, connected with each other by roads of steel, over which travel mighty engines of commerce.

*"The mothers of our Forest Land!  
Stout-hearted dames were they;  
With nerves to wield the battle-brand,  
And join the border fray."*

Today we vie with each other in doing homage to the pioneer. While this is a general term, let us not forget that to the pioneer mother is due a full share of the praise for giving us the blessings that we today enjoy. From earliest traditions we have honored the hero, but seldom has the heroine been mentioned. Let her be immortalized in bronze and marble, in song and story, and in all that is enduring.

O blessed Soul of the Wilderness! 'To thee we bring our tribute of praise—yes, to thee, we, thy descendants, grateful for all that thou hast said and done, grateful for all thy sufferings and sacrifices, we say with a heart full of reverence, "Bless thee, O my soul!"



## “GOING TO MILL.”

In the “good old days” they had to resort to various expedients in preparing the food for the table. Perhaps no phase of it is more interesting than the story of how they ground their corn and wheat.

In many families they had a grater. They perhaps called it a “gritter.” It was made of a piece of tin, most any size, that it was possible to get. They punched it full of holes, bent it with the rough side convex and nailed it to a piece of board, thus forming a sort of semi-cylinder. The corn on the cob was rubbed on this, like rubbing clothes on a washboard, and it was ground into meal which fell on the board and ran down into a wooden trough made for the purpose. This was a laborious process, but it was the best that many of them had.

The next step was what some have called the “hominy block.” It was arranged on the top of a stump or a block cut from a tree and set on end and hewn out or burned out so as to make it something like a large mortar. For a pestle they sometimes used a large, smooth stone weighing some fifteen or twenty pounds. This was very much like the plan the Indians had of putting the corn in a hole in a rock and rubbing it with another. They sometimes made a sort of maul, perhaps three feet long and weighing ten or fifteen pounds. They

even improved this and bent a sapling over, attached a piece of timber, six or more inches in diameter and six or eight feet long, in such a manner as to allow the timber to be brought down by pulling it. By this process, the labor was lessened. The inventive mind, prodded on by necessity, devised another plan. If a sapling were not handy, they sometimes laid a pole twenty-five or thirty feet long across a fork and with the heavy end under the corner of the house in such a manner as to allow the spring of the pole to lift the weight.

Next comes the hand-mill, very much like those used in the Holy Land today, and to which the Savior referred when he said, "Two women shall be grinding at a mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." It was made of two stones, one of which was stationary and called the bed stone. A movable one above it was called the runner. A shaft was put thru the runner, one end terminating in the bed stone and the other in a hole in a piece of timber above. Thru this shaft, a pole perhaps ten feet long was put in such a manner as to make two handles against which two people could push. The corn was fed thru a hole in the runner and the meal fell out from under it at the edges. This was free for the neighborhood and every family did their own grinding.

Perhaps the next step was the horse mill, made very much the same way only larger, allowing the horse or oxen to go in a circle twenty feet or more

in diameter. This was still improved by putting the horse, or team of horses, or yoke of oxen, to a separate "sweep" fastened to an upright beam which was the axle of a wheel fifteen or twenty feet in diameter. This large wheel carried a deer-skin or cow-hide belt working on a much smaller wheel on the axle of the runner. About that time they began to charge toll and the law said it should be one-tenth. They had not then worked out a system of weighing the grain and giving them their milling, but each had to wait until his own was ground. People went long distances and often had to wait a long time. This gave rise to the expression, "like going to mill," when you are expected to await your turn. It is said that when General Logan was a boy, he drove thirty miles to mill. He, of course, had to stay all night, but that night it rained. The belt got wet and stretched so that it fell. Some hungry dogs chewed part of it up so badly that they had to kill an ox, tan the hide and make part of a new belt. In this way, he was detained several days. My father, when just a lad, drove a yoke of oxen fully that far with a load of corn and wheat. Part of the wheat he sold at fifty cents a bushel.

The next step in this evolution was the water-mill, which was very much the same, but was run by water-power. If for no other reason, this kind of mill will be remembered thruout the ages on account of the popular poem, "Little Jerry, the Miller".

Near the close of pioneer days, the steam mill came into existence. Not until then was there a definite system worked out whereby people could exchange corn or wheat for meal or flour and get away without waiting for their own to be ground. Mills became more plentiful and people took smaller amounts to mill, often not more than three bushels of corn and three of wheat, and sometimes less than that. They spoke of this as a "turn of milling". Very little wheat was used for it was so hard to harvest and to thresh. Fifty bushels was considered a large crop of wheat. If it was bolted at all, it was thru a deer-skin full of small holes, punched with a red-hot wire. In few things have people changed more than in preparing "bread-stuff".

## “A RANGER’S ADVENTURE.”

(From Historical Collections of the Great West,  
Published 1853.)

Thomas Higgins was enlisted in a company of rangers and was stationed, in the summer of 1814, in a block-house eight miles south of Greenville, in what is now Bond County, Illinois. On the evening of the 30th of August, a small party of Indians having been seen prowling about the station, Lieutenant Journey with all his men, twelve only in number, sallied forth the next morning just before daylight in pursuit of them. They had not proceeded far on the border of the prairie before they were in an ambuscade of seventy or eighty savages. At the first fire the lieutenant and three of his men were killed. Six fled to the fort under cover of the smoke, for the morning was sultry and the air being damp, the smoke from the guns hung like a cloud over the scene, but Higgins remained behind to have “one more pull at the enemy,” and avenge the death of his companions.

He sprang behind a small elm, scarcely sufficient to protect his body, when, the smoke partly rising, he discovered a number of Indians. He fired and shot down the foremost one.

Still concealed by the smoke, Higgins reloaded, mounted his horse and turned to flee when a voice

hailed him, "Tom, you won't leave me, will you?" He turned around and seeing a fellow soldier by the name of Burgess, lying on the ground and gasping for breath, replied, "No, I'll not leave you, come along." "I can't," said Burgess, "my leg is all smashed to pieces." Higgins dismounted, and taking up his friend, was about to lift him onto his horse, when the animal, taking fright, darted off in an instant and left them both behind. "This is too bad," said Higgins, "but don't fear; hop off on your three legs and I'll stay between you and the Indians and keep them off. Get into the tallest grass and crawl as near the ground as possible." Burgess did so and escaped.

The smoke which had concealed Higgins now cleared away and he resolved if possible to retreat. To follow the track of Burgess was most expedient. It would, however, endanger his friend. He determined, therefore, to venture boldly forward and if discovered, to secure his own safety by the rapidity of his flight. On leaving a small thicket in which he had sought refuge, he discovered a tall, portly savage near by and two others between him and the fort. He paused for a moment and thought if he could separate them and fight them singly his case would not be so desperate. He started for a little rivulet near, but found one of his limbs failing him, it having been struck by a ball in the first encounter, of which till now he was scarcely conscious. The largest Indian pressed close upon him

and Higgins turned round two or three times to fire. The Indian halted and danced about to prevent his taking aim. He saw it was unsafe to fire at random and, perceiving two others approaching, knew he must be overpowered in a moment unless he could dispose of the forward Indian first. He resolved to halt and receive his fire. The Indian raised his rifle and Higgins, watching his eye, turned suddenly and received the ball in his thigh. He fell but rose immediately and ran. The foremost Indian, now certain of his prey, loaded again and with the other two pressed on. The whole three fired. He now fell and rose a third time and the Indians, throwing away their guns, advanced upon him with spears and knives. As he presented his gun at one or the other, each fell back. At last the largest Indian, supposing his gun to be empty, from his fire having been thus reserved, advanced boldly to the charge. Higgins fired and the savage fell.

He now had four bullets in his body, an empty gun in his hands, two Indians unharmed before him and a whole tribe but a few yards distant. Any other man would have despaired. Not so with him. He had slain the most dangerous of the three and, having little fear of the others, he began to load his rifle. They raised a savage whoop and rushed to the encounter. A bloody conflict ensued. The Indians stabbed him in several places. At last one of them threw a tomahawk, laid bare

his skull and stretched him upon the prairie. The Indians again rushed on, but Higgins, recovering his self-possession, kept them off with his feet and hands. Higgins grasped one of their spears and the Indian in attempting to pull it from him, raised him up. With his rifle he dashed out the brains of the nearest savage. In doing so he broke it, the barrel only remaining in his hands. The other Indian who had fought with caution came now manfully into the battle. To have fled from a man thus wounded and disarmed or to have suffered his victim to escape would have tarnished his name forever. Uttering, therefore, a terrific yell, he rushed on and attempted to stab the exhausted ranger, but the latter warded off his blow with one hand and brandished his rifle-barrel with the other. The Indian was yet unharmed and under existing circumstances the most powerful man. Higgins' courage, however, was unexhausted and inexhaustible. The savage at last began to retreat from the glare of his untamed eye to the spot where he dropped his rifle. Higgins knew that if he recovered that, his own case was desperate. Throwing his rifle barrel aside and drawing his hunting knife, he rushed upon his foe. A desperate strife ensued. Higgins, fatigued and exhausted by the loss of blood, was no longer a match for the savage. The latter succeeded in throwing his adversary from him and went immediately in quest of his rifle. Higgins at the same time sought for the gun of the other In-



dian. Both, bleeding and out of breath, were in search of arms to renew the combat.

The smoke had now cleared away and a large number of Indians were in view. It would seem that nothing could save the gallant ranger. There was, however, an eye to pity and an arm to save, and that arm was a woman's. The little garrison had witnessed the whole combat. It consisted of six men and one woman, but that woman, a Mrs. Pursley, was a host. When she saw Higgins contending single-handed with a whole tribe of savages, she urged the rangers to attempt the rescue. The rangers objected as the Indians were ten to one. Mrs. Pursley snatched a rifle from her husband's hands and declaring, "So fine a fellow as Tom Higgins should not be lost for want of help," mounted a horse and sallied forth to his rescue. The men, unwilling to be outdone by a woman, followed at full gallop, reached the spot where Higgins fell before the Indians came up, and while the savage with whom he had been engaged was looking for his rifle, they threw the wounded ranger across a horse before one of the party and reached the fort in safety.

Higgins was insensible for several days and his life was preserved only by continual care. His friends extracted two balls from his thigh but two remained and one of them gave him a great deal of pain. Hearing that a physician had settled within a day's ride of him, he went to see him, but the

physician asked him fifty dollars and this Higgins flatly refused to pay. On reaching him he requested his wife to hand him his razor. With her assistance he laid open his thigh until the razor touched the bullet, then inserting his two thumbs into the gash he "flirted it out," as he used to say, "without costing him a cent." The other ball yet remained, tho it gave him but little pain and he carried it with him to his grave. Higgins died in Fayette County a few years since. He was the most perfect specimen of a frontier man in his day and was once assistant door-keeper in the House of Representatives in Illinois. The facts above stated are familiar to many to whom Higgins was personally known and there is no doubt of their correctness.

To the foregoing I might add that Higgins was once engaged to fight a duel. It was to be fought with rocks. A pile of rocks of convenient size to be thrown was arranged for each one of them at a distance of ten steps from each other. Each had his seconds and when the word was given, the rocks went from Higgins so much like the shot from a rapid-fire gun that the other fellow fled. Thus ended the duel in favor of Higgins.

## “LASSES.”

My dear reader, I am not giddy. I am not talking about girls but I am talking about something sweeter. Those who have never had the pleasure of playing around a sugar camp could never guess what it is, so I will tell. It is sugar molasses. They used to call it “lasses”. In pioneer days there were many sugar camps out in the woods, where there were lots of maples or, as they were called, “sugar trees”. When the sap began to run, they took kettles, kegs, buckets, pans, gourds and other things too numerous to mention and went to the woods.

The trees were tapped by boring holes into them and putting an “elder” (alder) stalk into the hole in such a manner as to make a spout, which ran the sap into a trough made by cutting a log two or three feet long, splitting it in halves and digging it out something like the Indians used to do for canoes.

The “sap” or “drip” was hauled in every morning on a small sled with a barrel on it, and it was put to boiling as soon as possible. Sometimes the “bailiwick” of one man overlapped another’s, and it often caused trouble. Deer liked this sap also, and sometimes a man went to his trough and found it like Old Mother Hubbard’s cupboard. That occasionally caused trouble, also, as competitors were

liable to accuse each other of taking their sap. In one instance, of which I recall hearing my father speak, two men had trouble at a sugar camp and one killed the other. The dying man requested that he be buried where he killed his last "buck". His request was granted and he was buried on the top of the hill where the wind, moaning in the trees, sang his requiem for fifty years.

Some of them had to stay at camp at night and occasionally a deer or other animal would come up, attracted either by the light or the scent of the camp. Their eyes could be seen shining far back in the dark, in fact, so far back that the men could see only the eyes of the animals, but that was enough, for the pioneer was a good shot and he usually got them. This was called "shining a deer."

Children were all around the camp and as happy as mortals could be. Smoke, ashes, dirt and "lasses" so completely covered them that you could scarcely have told whether they were white or black. By means of shifting sap from one kettle to another, they had some cooked to sugar, some to "lasses" and some not quite so far along. It was good "fillin'" and the children couldn't keep out of it. If they had a stick or a paddle, they used it and if not, they dipped their fingers in and then licked them off. My experience goes back just far enough that I had a chance to see the last of the sugar camps in Illinois. Gee! The kiddies of the twentieth century do not know what they have missed!

## "BUCK-SKIN BREECHES."

On the Big Muddy River in Jackson County, there lived in the "good old days" a well-to-do family who had a beautiful daughter, who was the admiration of the young men for miles around. There came to court her one winter's evening one of the young men of the neighborhood, dressed in the best that pioneer life afforded. As is, of course, always the case when a young man goes to see his best girl, the hours passed swiftly by and it was time for him to go home, but it began to rain and he was persuaded to stay all night. When he was shown his apartment, he bade the lovely girl "good night," hastily undressed, carelessly dropped his buck-skin breeches on the floor and was soon in a snug, warm bed and since it was late, he soon fell asleep.

It became a cold, blustery night. The rain and sleet blew into his room and completely covered his breeches, much of it going inside. As it turned colder his breeches were frozen so stiff that he could make them stand alone. Imagine his consternation, if you can, when he awoke the next morning and found his Sunday breeches in that condition. What was he to do? What would you do? He tried to put them on, but it was out of the question. Taking them in his hands, he went to the room of the mother and father of the girl, where there

was the only fire-place in the house. He sat them against the jamb to thaw out and to dry while he scampered back to bed. Trouble enough it seemed to him, but it was only the beginning, for as they thawed out next the fire, they naturally fell that way and fell in. Finally, the father began to smell burning leather and jumped out of bed, but too late to save the young man's breeches. They were damaged beyond use. The young man was informed of the accident but what could he do except to stay in bed until another pair could be fixed up for him and that is just what he did. The father came to the rescue and lent him a pair, and without much ceremony the boy turned his steps homeward. Just what the girl thought of this unusual performance, neither history nor tradition tells us, but we are told that it was a long time before he had the courage to even look at the girl again and that he finally married another girl.

## PIONEER BOATMEN.

Many and marvelous are the changes that have been made in all the walks of human endeavor in the last one hundred years, but I believe there are no changes that are more marked than have been made in transportation. This is particularly true as applied to rivers.

Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet were content to ply the Father of Waters and the Illinois in company with the Indians in their little canoes, scarcely dreaming of the changes a few generations were to bring forth. A few years later the French were going on exploring and trading voyages down the Ohio with boats large enough to carry considerable quantities of freight. This continued until their plans were frustrated when the English drove them from their uncompleted fort where Pittsburgh now stands.

A few years later Colonel George Rogers Clark and his intrepid band of soldiers floated down the Ohio in a boat still more pretentious. They were, in a sense, pathfinders and it was the beginning of a new day, for after the Revolutionary War was over, navigation of the Ohio and the Mississippi began in earnest. Many of the men who had been in Clark's expedition went back to settle on the rich farming land in what is now known as the American Bottom above Kaskaskia. Others came

in large parties from the old home "back East", pushed across the mountains to the Monongahela Valley or to Pittsburgh, or some other point on the Ohio, and built large flat boats on which they loaded all their belongings and finally landed somewhere on the Illinois shore or possibly they laboriously worked their way against the current up the Wabash or the Mississippi. These boats were from fifty to sixty feet long and from twelve to fifteen feet wide. One writer says, "They were loaded with a little of everything". The cargo included provisions for the trip, some tools—particularly axes, a good supply of ammunition and a trusty rifle for each man and boy, and possibly an extra supply of clothing. To all these were added dogs, chickens, ducks, geese, pigs, sheep and cattle. We must not forget that this was a passenger boat, too. It must have looked very much like Noah's Ark, for it is said that once a young fellow yelled at the captain of one of these crafts and said:

"Hello, old Noah, have you any room for anything else in your ark?"

The captain looked around for a moment and said:

"Yes, I think we have room for a donkey yet; come, jump on."

Following this, men made it a business to take the products of the new country down to New Orleans. They made larger boats, called keel-boats.



They drank and gambled and had a glorious time generally as they went down, regardless of the fact that they were in constant danger of being attacked by Indians or pirates, but the return trip was one of toil and hardship. Often they could make no progress at all against the current, and they had to go ahead and tie a rope to a tree, then pull themselves up "hand over," or sometimes they wound the rope on a windlass. This took a long time and a trip often lasted a whole season. These boatmen were strong and courageous. They had grown up on the rivers and were used to hardships. They despised a life of ease and luxury. They knew what danger was and courted it in all its forms. They feared neither God nor Devil, and much further were they from fearing man. They often had to fight Indians and sometimes competing crews fought to the death. Occasionally they fell out among themselves and if things seemed too quiet, they would have a fight just to see who could whip.

A fair specimen of these boatmen was Mike Fink. Immoral and unprincipled, but whatever his faults, he was not a coward. It is said that he was a great joker, but if any one failed to laugh at his jokes, he gave them a whipping. He used to say, "I'm a Salt River roarer; I'm chuck full of fight and I love the women." The following incident, however, does not indicate that his last statement is true. Once while his boat was tied up, another boatman

made a landing near his. Mike was seen to be in a bad humor as he went into the edge of the woods and raked up a large pile of dry leaves. They asked him why he was doing it, but he went on sullenly without a word. Finally it was as high as his head and he went back to the boat and got his rifle, then called to Peggy, his wife, to follow. She knew something was wrong and said in alarm, "Mr. Fink, what have I done?" No reply came, but she followed as he led the way to the pile of leaves. He ordered her to lie down and she obeyed. Then he set fire to them and told her if she moved he would shoot her. She stood it as long as she could, but finally, with her hair and dress on fire, she ran and jumped into the river. Then Mike, with his usual profanity thrown in for emphasis, said: "Now that'll larn ye not to be winkin' at them fellers on t'other boat."

Most of them were good marksmen and he was particularly so. Once he shot a negro in the heel just to hear him yell. He had a friend who was an equally good marksman and they often used to shoot a cup of whiskey off of each other's heads at a distance of seventy steps. They had a quarrel, but made up, and to celebrate the treaty they agreed to try their old feat. They tossed up a coin to see who might shoot first. Mike won and when he fired his comrade fell dead. Mike at first claimed it was an accident, but later, as if to justify his reputation as a marksman, he said he hit

where he aimed. The person to whom he spoke drew a pistol and put a bullet thru his heart. Thus died Mike Fink, the last of the keel boatmen.

In 1811, the same year as the great earthquake at New Madrid, the first steamboat west of the Alleghenies was built at Pittsburgh. It was named the New Orleans. As it made its first trip down the Ohio and the Mississippi, many interesting things of note occurred. Many of the people had never heard of a steamboat, nor would they have believed the story within the realm of possibility. On a fine, still, moonlight night it rounded in at Louisville. The escaping steam and the noise in rounding to land produced a general alarm and the whole town was up in a little while and down at the river. A comet had recently been visible and the superstitious people thought it had fallen into the river. Greater consternation was added to the scene because they believed that a comet was a harbinger of war and many other dire punishments from the Almighty. It is said that many others, who either heard or saw the boat on the river for the first time, fled for the hills and would not return for several days or until they were persuaded to believe the true story of the new invention. It plied the Ohio and the Mississippi from that time until 1811, when it was sunk near Shreveport, Louisiana, but others had been built. This boat sounded the death knell of the keel-boats. A new era in navigation had been ushered in and the steamboat had come to stay.

## CAMP MEETINGS.

Contrary to the general belief, camp meetings were originated by the Presbyterians, and not by the Methodists, but the Methodists soon joined in and it became a kind of union meeting. They began in western Tennessee in the closing days of the eighteenth century, but were soon introduced into southern Illinois by the Methodists and were continued for a good many years.

A traveling preacher would go into a neighborhood and would have such power over his congregation that the people did not doubt that his power was supernatural. The effect on the audience has been variously described. It was somewhat analogous to mesmerism of our own times. Under the peculiar eloquence of the preacher or the melody of the songs, some one would begin shouting. It was "catching", and in a few minutes the same thing was going on all over the house. Soon they would fall on the floor, sometimes rolling and jerking and sometimes lying perfectly motionless, apparently in a state midway between life and death for hours at a time.

Of course, all those things brought great crowds, some came for fun, some out of idle curiosity, but no doubt a large percentage of them were prompted by motives of pure religious devotion. Regardless of their motives for gathering, they were "moved

by the Spirit'', and many ''who came to scoff remained to pray''. It was soon found that no house would accommodate the crowds and they assembled in a grove near some spring. People came by the thousands and camped until the meetings closed and this was sometimes for several weeks. Between the sessions the people visited from camp to camp and read the Bible, and while the sessions were on, the wildest enthusiasm reigned. There were mingled voices of preaching, praying, crying and singing.

When the final session closed and the people departed for their homes, they could be heard singing and shouting praises to God, until their voices died away in the distance.

## WITCHCRAFT.

In 1799, two negroes, one at Kaskaskia and the other at Cahokia, were adjudged guilty of witchcraft and were burned at the stake, according to law. This is but a clue to a belief that was quite prevalent during the early days in Illinois.

The men were usually good marksmen but if, while on a hunt, they were "out of luck," as we would probably say, they said some one had bewitched their gun and about the only way the spell of the witch could be broken, was to take the gun to a stream running from a certain spring, unscrew the breech and allow the water to flow thru from muzzle to breech for a certain number of hours.

If a cow became sick, it was generally thought that she had either lost her cud or that she was bewitched. If they diagnosed the case as the former malady, she was made to swallow a greasy dishrag. If that did not cure, she was bewitched. When her milk "fell off", that is, when she ceased to give her usual amount of milk, which is always the case when she is sick, the witches were milking her. They supposed that the witch did it by hanging a towel over her own door and that by some mysterious power she was able to cause the milk to go from the cow to the towel and that the witch then got the milk by wringing the towel.

They had an idea that if people became sick and slippery elm or some other simple remedy would not cure them, they were under the spell of a witch and they had more faith in a "witch-master" than in a medical doctor. If the person got well, they thought the witch had lost her power and could regain it only by borrowing something from the family she wished to harm. It often happened that the very best women of the community, who had given the best of their lives to the community, were refused the simplest favors because the people were afraid they were giving new power to a witch.

## KASKASKIA CURSED.

That the following story is strictly historical, I can not assert. That there is much truth in it, can not be doubted. Many people, who are more or less superstitious, are inclined to believe it all. With the caution "not to take it too seriously" I am publishing it just because it is a good story.

Jean Benard was one of the first merchants in Old Kaskaskia. His business prospered and he soon became one of the most influential men in the community. His home became a social center. This was partly due to his geniality, but more to the fact that he had a daughter who gained the reputation of being the most beautiful girl in all the Mississippi Valley. She had many a gay young lover among the French from far and near, but it seems that Fate had decreed that she should reject all of them.

Many of the Kaskaskia Indians became converted to Christianity. Among them was a young man who strove hard to get an education and such were his efforts that he soon gained the reputation of being the best educated among the young men of the community. He began trading and prospered from the beginning. It was not long until he was taken in as a partner in the largest trading establishment in Kaskaskia, and soon was on a level socially with the young Frenchmen of the community.



It is to be supposed that a man as popular as he and a girl as pretty as Marie would meet, and that is just what happened, or did it "just happen?" When they met, it was a case of love at first sight. He admired her sweet voice and her pretty face, and she in turn could not help but admire his tall, manly form and his plucky disposition. Benard believed in the superiority of French blood and could not bear the idea of his daughter's courting an Indian, no matter what his standing, so he did all he could against him, socially and financially, and finally succeeded in forcing him out of business and society, but love always finds a way and in spite of the vigilant eye of Benard, they managed to meet occasionally until they chose to change their plans.

No one knew the Indian's plans but Marie, and she never told. He left Kaskaskia and for many months no one ever heard of him. Benard thought that his daughter had forgotten her lover, for she appeared gay and careless and accepted with apparent pleasure the attentions of young Frenchmen. One day a strange Indian appeared. That night Marie and the strange Indian disappeared. He was her old lover. The conclusion was, of course, reached without much delay that the couple had fled together and this was correct. A party was at once organized to follow, and as a new snow had fallen, they were easily trailed. They were overtaken near where the thriving city of Co-

lumbia now stands. The facts developed that he had provided a home for her at the French settlement of Chouteau, now a part of St. Louis, Missouri.

In order to protect Marie, the Indian surrendered without much resistance, and they were taken back to Kaskaskia. Some of the men in the pursuing party were rivals of the Indian for the hand of Marie and they and others of the posse wanted to kill the Indian on the spot, but Benard claimed the right to name the punishment that should be meted out to the lover of his daughter.

When the party reached Kaskaskia, the daughter was placed in a convent. Then they took the Indian to the bank of the Mississippi, bound him with his back to a log and set him afloat. As this helpless Indian floated away he lifted his eyes toward Heaven and with a loud voice he called down the curse of God—on Benard and the city of Kaskaskia. He asked God to give a violent death to Benard, to destroy Kaskaskia even to the graves of the dead, leaving only the name. Benard was killed in a duel, and how fully his curse on Kaskaskia was fulfilled, history tells us only too well, for as he invoked God in his curse, the same mighty river that was drifting him down to his doom, later overflowed and swept away the entire town, leaving not even their graves. The Father of Waters now floats over the site of this one time proud metropolis of the west. On dark, stormy nights, the

ghost of the Indian is said to appear. The spectre with strong arms bound and with face upturned, floats placidly on the river where it sweeps over the vanished city in which Marie Benard lived and in which she died mourning the Red Man whom she loved.

## FREAK LAWSUITS OF PIONEER DAYS.

At Shawneetown, Illinois, there is an old justice's docket that gives some interesting things relative to law suits in that locality. Part of it is scarcely legible and the language far from the rules of grammar, but part of it is well written and the language is a mark of scholarship in the one who wrote it. Here are some things docketed in 1822, just four years after Illinois had been admitted into the Union as a State. In one case the judgment was for five dollars and thirty-seven and a half cents, and it was the order of the court that the judgment be paid in salt at three bits a bushel. (A bit was a coin worth twelve and a half cents.) In another case, a man was sued for four bits and the verdict was, "We the jury find the defendant guilty." In regard to the same case the further notation was made, "The amount has been paid in Kentucky paper and the court is satisfied." Still another case gives judgment for one dollar and fifty cents and costs, itemizing the costs as follows: 25 cents, 37½ cents, 25 cents, 12½ cents, 37½ cents.

There are other cases as interesting that are nearer to our own times. In 1833, some religious fanatics in Cass County attempted to burn an old woman as a burnt offering, were indicted for rioting and fined three dollars. In 1840, at old Browns-

ville, near where Murphysboro now stands, two men swore positively to a steer. One admitted that he had not seen it for a year, but asserted that he knew it because he was personally acquainted with it. The justice could not tell which to believe so he gave judgment that they kill the steer, divide it equally between them and give the hide and tallow to the court for the costs.

When the Illinois Central was being built, a large gang of Irishmen were pushing wheelbarrows near where Tamaroa now stands. They got on a drunk and a warrant was issued for one of them. A constable went to make the arrest. He could not get him, but he fined him and took back with him both fine and costs. That constable was Henry Clay, a man who afterwards became a lawyer of considerable ability and was a member of the Illinois Legislature.

With rare exceptions the people were honest and meant to be law-abiding. Their differences were as a general thing "settled out of court", either by mutual agreement, arbitration by a trusted neighbor, or by fighting it out. The records give comparatively few cases of larceny and where stealing did occur it was pressing necessities that brought it about. In Jackson County a man by the name of Wolf was brought before a justice charged with stealing a hog. When the charges were read and he was asked to plead guilty or not guilty, he gave the following speech to the court. "If your

honor please, I believe I am, but if you have any doubts as to the facts, just call on Bill Page. He was with me and got half the shoat, but we needed it or we would not have taken it." After knitting his brow and scratching his head for a long time the court said, "It appears from the testimony that you, Wolf, the defendant in this suit, have violated the statutory law of the State and are guilty of a misdemeanor. You are fined five gallons of whiskey and the costs, the court to be paid in deer skins killed in the short blue season." (Perhaps we should digress here long enough to explain that the deer sheds twice a year. The heavy hair of the winter is shed in the spring. It sheds again in the fall and is left with a covering of short hair that in color is between a blue and iron-gray.)

The following case does not belong under an article of this heading, but it is worthy of note, so we here include the incident. A man named—— was sentenced to be hanged at Albion. He had a rifle that was coveted by all the neighbors for miles around. One of them proposed that he would get him a pardon for the rifle. The condemned man accepted the proposition. The other man took a jug and a paper and went to work among his friends. In a short time he had enough signatures to a petition for pardon to feel justified in presenting it to the Governor. The pardon was secured and offered to the condemned man. He refused to give up the rifle, saying the pardon was not worth

it. They were sitting before a big fire and the man who secured the petition threw the petition behind the back-log. This brought the criminal to time. The pardon was gotten out before it burned up, and the man was released.

## MONEY OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

To use the language of one of the pioneers, "Money was purty scace (pretty scarce) in them days." And they had such a variety of standards that they seldom knew what their money was worth or how it would fluctuate in value. If a person proposed a trade the answer often came back in an inquiry, "What kind of money have you got?" The answer may have been, "Government money," but it was more likely to be "State money," or "Kentucky money," or some other kind of money, or still more likely it was a general statement of what he had to trade. Various hides and other things had a value placed on them and they passed as currency. Debts were made and they were paid with them. In some localities notes were given promising to pay so many saddles of venison at a certain time. In other localities cattle were made the standard of value. They were rated as "first-rate," "second-rate" and "third-rate". A first-rate cow and calf was worth ten dollars in State money. A second-rate one was worth eight dollars and a third-rate was worth six dollars.

Thus all property was rated and if a man wilfully rated his property wrongly he was considered what we would call a "crook" and it was hard to get people to trade with him. Neighbors were sometimes called in to rate their goods. The judg-



ment of these neighbors was law and from their decision there was no appeal. Milk, butter, eggs, beef, pork, venison, etc., were all given away among the neighbors for their own use, but for the market they had a value—pork, beef and venison at about half a cent per pound, eggs about three cents per dozen, and butter, if at all, three cents per pound. This is the kind of money they had to pay “the butcher, the baker and the candle-stick maker”, and the preacher, too, but they were their own butchers, their own bakers and candle-stock-makers and some one of their own number was the preacher.

## SETTLING THEIR DIFFERENCES.

Illinois is a big State and people came from many sections in the "good old days," so we might expect that customs differed widely. In few localities was it always possible to settle their differences without resorting to personal encounters. Be it said, however, that they fought "fair", that is, each man depended absolutely on his skill or power of endurance without resorting to weapons. When they had a fight, that settled all, for no one was considered a man if he did not take the consequences without a complaint afterwards. It was a rule to fight in the open, a square stand-up fight and to fight hard and when one hollowed the other was to pour water for him to wash, then vice-versa.

"On one occasion a couple of old 'cubs' got into a fight. They 'fibbed' away merrily on each other's ribs, for a while, stuck out viciously for the 'bread baskets', handled their 'mauleys' dexterously, sent in 'stingers' on 'potato-traps', 'pasted' each other hotly in their respective 'smellers', after the most approved style of the fistic art, and in accordance with the rule of the 'London prize ring'. At last one got the head of the other in 'chancery' and he was forced to cry 'enough'. As the winner of the first round was pouring water on the hands of the loser, the latter said, 'Well, you have whipped me, but I'll bet you five venison hams

that my wife can whip your wife.' The bet was soon taken and the time appointed for the 'set-to' between the women.'" The incident ended here, for they found the women utterly unwilling to make themselves ridiculous and to degrade themselves in such a manner.

## A TRAPPER'S PREDICAMENT.

In those days wild turkeys were common and people often caught them in a trap called a turkey pen, constructed or rather built as follows: With poles they would build a pen about six feet square on the side of a hill, and would dig a ditch about a foot deep on the lower side running up into the pen. They would cover it with poles and to give it a forest-like appearance would throw brush around it. With corn scattered profusely in the ditch, the turkeys were lured up into the pen, but a turkey will not look down for a way out so they are caught. A man named Charles Davis built one of these pens and going to it one morning, found that he had several turkeys in it. He partly removed the cover and climbed in. The frightened turkeys made a lot of noise and attracted a hungry wolf. It did not see Davis and it came bounding down the hill and into the pen and upon him. Imagine the scene if you can—man, wolf and turkeys all wanting out. It did not take Davis long to get busy. Without being told, he opened practically the whole top of the pen to make plenty of room and wolf, turkeys and man all escaped. In speaking of the incident afterwards, Davis said, "If I hadn't knocked the whole kiver off that ere pen I do believe that blamed wolf would have killed its fool self." We naturally wonder if the man would not have done so too.

## PIONEER HASH.

I do not know just what hash is made of and I am frank to say that I do not believe any one else does. I only know that it is made up of a little of everything. As you read on you shall see why this article is thus named.

In pioneer days it was a common custom to play pranks on each other that would be taken pretty seriously now, but were accepted with good grace then. In what is now Monroe County a religious meeting was being held at one of the neighbor's homes, a small cabin with only one window. While they were all down on their knees devoutly in prayer, a boy named Lemen threw a calf in at the window. In doing this he managed to extinguish the only candle that was burning. The calf began to bawl and the people were scared almost out of their wits. The women were screaming and throughout the whole situation pandemonium reigned. They thought the "Evil Spirit" was in their midst. Finally the candle was lighted and there it was—only a calf. (It ought to be added here that Lemen was of a large and respected family in that county and in later years he became a power for good in the community.)

In those days, it was great amusement to scare people and they resorted to many plans to do so. People were superstitious and mortally afraid of

ghosts. In one instance a man had a blaze-faced horse named Baldy, but it died. Some boys got into his chicken-roost one night to decoy him from the house. He thought it was an owl and here he came in his night clothes! One of the boys got between him and the house and had on what was known as a horse-head, made of a sheet. The man thought it was Baldy's spirit and began to beg, "Oh, Baldy, you know I was good to you. What do you want? Go away and leave me, Baldy," etc. The boy, seeing he took matters so seriously got to one side to allow him to run to the house, but the man thought no more of this earthly home and would not run. He finally fainted and the boys had to make themselves known. The boy wearing the horse-head was my father.

Things that seem remarkable, we are often prone to doubt. It scarcely seems credible that far less than a hundred years ago, that the whole State was overrun with wild animals that preyed upon the crops, the poultry, the hogs, the sheep and the cattle of the pioneers. Even the people were not always safe. The wolves would sometimes attack a herd of sheep and kill several at a time. Deer would go in droves and jump into a field of corn at night and destroy a large part of it. Opossums, raccoons and owls were enemies of the chickens, as well as were also the hawk and the eagle. I wish I could tell you the story with the same flash of the eye that my mother used to tell how the panther

was decoyed from his den. Panthers are afraid of men and will run from their voices, but they are attracted by the voice of a girl or a woman. Whether it be true that "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," I do not know, but I do know that often my mother when a little girl, would ride thru the forests behind her father and sing in order that he might get a shot at the panther as it stealthily approached them. Such things as this were not considered unusual occurrences.

I remember hearing my father tell that when he was a little boy down in Union County there were lots of Indians and that the two races got along well together. They loaned and gave to each other and were always ready to help. My grandmother gave milk to them, but one day an unusual thing happened. The little Indian girl fell down and spilt the milk. She then returned for more milk, but because it was all gone she had to return with her bucket empty. The Indian father was enraged at this apparent stinginess and demanded that they milk the cow. Finally, being convinced that the milk was not to be gotten, he wished to express his apology in a substantial way and brought over a fresh saddle of venison. The Indians were always ready to meet you more than half way either in peace or war. It has been said that they never forgot an enemy, but it might be said with equal propriety that they never forgot a friend.

## SONG OF THE PIONEERS.

*A song for the early times out west,  
And our green old forest home,  
Whose pleasant memories freshly yet  
Across the bosom come.  
A song for the free and gladsome life,  
In those early days we led,  
With a teeming soil beneath our feet,  
And a smiling Heaven o'erhead!  
Oh, the waves of life danced merrily,  
And had a joyous flow,  
In the days when we were Pioneers.  
Some fifty years ago.*

*The hunt, the shot, the glorious chase,  
The captured elk or deer;  
The camp, the big bright fire, and then  
The rich and wholesome cheer;  
The sweet sound sleep at dead of night,  
By our camp-fire blazing high—  
Unbroken by the wolf's long howl,  
And the panther springing by.  
Oh, merrily passed the time despite  
Our wily Indian foe,  
In the days when we were Pioneers,  
Some fifty years ago.*

*We felt that we were fellow-men;  
We felt we were a band,  
Sustained here in the wilderness  
By Heaven's upholding hand,  
And when the solemn Sabbath came,  
We gathered in the wood,  
And lifted up our hearts in prayer*



*To God the only good.  
Our temples then were earth and sky—  
None other did we know,  
In the days when we were Pioneers,  
Some fifty years ago.*

*Our forest life was rough and rude,  
And dangers closed us round;  
But here amid the green old trees,  
Freedom was sought and found.  
Oft thru our dwellings wintry blasts  
Would rush with shriek and moan;  
We cared not, tho they were but frail,  
We felt they were our own.  
Oh, free and manly lives we led,  
'Mid verdure or 'mid snow,  
In the days when we were Pioneers,  
Some fifty years ago.*

*But now our course of life is short,  
And as, from day to day,  
We're walking on with halting step,  
And fainting by the way,  
Another land more bright than this,  
To our dim sight appears,  
And on our way to it we'll soon  
Again be Pioneers;  
Yet, while we linger, we may all  
A backward glance still throw,  
To the days when we were Pioneers,  
Some fifty years ago.*

BY WILLIAM D. GALLAGHER,

Published in an Atlas of Jackson County, Ill., in 1878.

## A PIONEER VOCABULARY.

Some of these words were introduced from the old home and were never in common use, but they were used by the pioneers in some localities. Others were improper forms or pronunciations of other words but were common enough to justify inserting them here. Still others were new words which originated out of the necessities of pioneer life and went out of use with the introduction of new surroundings. No attempt is made to make a complete list of words peculiar to pioneer life, but to give only a few words and phrases which they used and which have now practically gone out of use.

**Ash-hopper**, a sort of hopper made by setting clap-boards about three feet long into a trough three or four feet long, leaving the upper end of the boards to extend about thirty degrees from a perpendicular so as to make the two sides meet in the trough, forming an angle of about sixty degrees. The ends were built in with other boards. The hopper was then filled with wood ashes and kept dry until they wanted to use it. The pioneer woman poured water over it to make lye, which was used to make soap.

**Back-log**, a cut of a log a foot or more in diameter to put in the back of a fire-place in making a fire.

**Boot-jack**, a piece of plank eighteen inches or two feet in length with an opening in one end which would just fit the boot heel. It was used to pull the boots off.

**Brace of ducks**, two dead ducks tied together to make them more easily carried.

**Buck-skin Breeches**, trousers made of the hide of a buck, worn with the hairy side in during cold weather and the other way during summer.

**Bullet-mould**, a small iron instrument used by the pioneers to mould bullets for their rifles.

**Cabin**, a small log-house made by building the logs together like a pen and covered with clap-boards.

**Candle-moulds**, moulds made of tin into which tallow was poured to make candles.

**Candle-snips**, an instrument something like scissors to trim the charred ends of the wick in a candle.

**Clap-board**, broad, thin pieces of timber made by cutting a log into cuts from two to five feet long and then splitting them. The blocks were split into eighths and then the points were split off and discarded. This was called bolting and the parts were called bolts. The bolts were then rived or split into boards with a frow. It was quite an art to make good boards.

**Cards**, a pair of wire brushes about six by nine inches, used in working wool into strings. This was called carding.

**Chinking**, blocks or slivers of wood used to fill the cracks in the walls of a cabin.

**Civilized meat**, an expression used to distinguish pork and beef from venison or the meat of other wild animals.

**Cradle**, an instrument made for cutting wheat. It had a snead or handle about four feet long, properly curved, a blade and four fingers, each about three feet long, set at right angles to the handle with the fingers in such a position as to catch the grain as it fell from the blade. A strong man could cut and swath about three acres in a day.

**Crane**, a hook put in the fire-place to hang pots and kettles over the fire. They sometimes hung meat on it to roast it.

**Critter**. Pioneers often referred to their horses as critters. The word is a corruption of the word, creatures.

**Dinner-horn**, a horn used to call the farmers from the field.

**Dog-iron**, another name for andiron or firedog. They were used to keep the wood from falling out of the fire-place.

**Drap**, an incorrect pronunciation of drop, e.g., I just drapped in to see you a minute, or, The children drap the corn.

**Drinking-gourd**, a gourd with a portion grown out like a dipper handle and with one side of it cut away so as to make it like a dipper. One was usu-

ally kept at the well. They held from one to three pints and would last a long time.

**Fence-worm**, the first rail of each panel of a rail fence. They were built zig-zag to enable them to cross the rails at the ends. It was not an easy job to lay a fence-worm.

**Fifth Quarter**, the hide and tallow of a beef. It was sometimes given to an expert rifleman at a shooting match in order to appease him for being ruled out of the game.

**Fire-place**, a large opening in a chimney where a fire may be built.

**Flint-lock**, a gun arranged so that a piece of steel would strike fire from a piece of flint and thus ignite the powder.

**Frow (fro)**, an instrument with a blade about sixteen inches long and having a handle about the same length, set at right angles. It was used in riving clap-boards.

**Gee**, a word to a horse telling him to turn to the right. The opposite is haw.

**Galluses**, suspenders.

**Grease-lamp**, in use more than two thousand years ago. It consisted of a dish of some kind containing grease and a cotton string for a wick. Fire was applied to the end of the wick hanging over the side of the vessel. By capillary attraction, the grease was drawn up and burned, making a fairly good light.

**Gritter (grater)**, a common article made by punching holes in a piece of tin and attaching it to a board, making a segment of a cylinder with the rough side of the tin outside. It was used for grating corn.

**Hand-spike**, a lever five or six feet long with both ends smooth, used to carry logs, a man lifting at each end of the hand-spike, with the log in the middle. At log-rollings, two or three were used under the same log. It was a great feat to pull everybody else down with a hand-spike.

**Horse-power**, now a unit by which power is measured. Then it meant a machine to which horses were hitched so as to go around in a circle and furnish power for grist mills, saw mills, etc.

**Indian-summer**, a period of mild weather in the late autumn or the early winter, usually characterized by a cloudless sky and a hazy, smoky-like horizon. It is of uncertain origin, but tradition says it is the time that Indians burned the leaves and gathered nuts.

**Johnny-board**, a smooth board to put dough on before the fire to bake bread. It was probably a corruption of Journey-board, a name given to it because they used it when they were moving.

**Johnny-cake**, a cake of bread made on the johnny-board.

**Latch-string**, a string which extended from the door-latch upward and out thru a hole in such a

manner as to permit the latch to be lifted with it while it hung out. If the latch-string hung out, visitors were welcome to enter, hence the expression, "the latch-string hangs out," when we mean to say you are welcome.

**Lead**, the horse on the left in a two-horse team. It is sometimes called the "near" horse. The other is the "off" horse.

**Line a hymn**. Song books were scarce, so the preacher would read a line of a song, then they would sing it, then he would read another and so on thru the song. This was called "lining a hymn."

**Loom**, a large machine, usually home made, used for weaving cloth, carpets, etc.

**Linsey-woolsey**, a kind of woolen dress, all home made.

**Lizard**, a piece of timber cut out of the fork of a tree and made into a sort of a sled, used in dragging logs.

**Log-rolling**. In the winter the farmers would clear the ground, i.e., they cut the timber off and in the spring the neighbors met and rolled and piled the logs to burn. This meeting was called a log-rolling.

**Mast**, the crop of acorns, nuts, etc., that fell from the forest trees in the autumn. Hogs were allowed to run at large and were fattened on it.

**Mourner's-bench**, the front seat of a church where those who were sorry for their sins were urged to come to be prayed for.

**Muster-day**, a day set apart for all the men to gather together and practice military drill. (See Waller's History of Illinois.)

**Pillion**, a sort of saddle or cushion for a lady, to be put on a horse behind a man's saddle. It was the custom for a young man to take his best girl on the horse behind him.

**Plew**, a whole hide of an animal.

**Plow-line**, a rope used in directing the horse in plowing.

**Pounder**, a weight used in pounding grain. They varied in weight from one pound to several pounds. Sometimes it was a large round pebble but usually it was made of wood.

**Puncheon**, a piece of log six or eight feet long, split open, the round side notched and the other smoothed, used in making floors, etc.

**Powder horn**, a cow's horn in which powder was carried on a hunt.

**Quill-pen**, a writing pen made of goose quills. It was a great point in favor of a teacher to be able to make a good pen.

**Reel**, an instrument used in getting yarn ready to knit.

**Saddle of venison**, two hams of venison not cut apart.



**Salt gourd**, a gourd in which salt was kept. It usually had an opening in the upper part of one side and was hung up by the stem.

**Shaving-horse**, a bench with a vise arranged to operate by the feet. It was used to hold a piece of timber while it was being shaved or whittled down with a drawing-knife.

**Shine a coon**. This meant to get into such a position that a raccoon which the dogs had "treed" (found in a tree) would be exactly between the hunter and the moon. A good marksman could shoot toward the moon and get the raccoon.

**Shine a deer**. This meant to build a fire in the woods at night and wait for a deer to come up so that the light shining in the eyes of a deer could be seen. The deer was shy and stayed a long distance away, but a good marksman could get them.

**Sley**, an instrument for the warp to go thru in a loom.

**Shot-pouch**, a leather pouch swung around the shoulders, used in carrying shot while out hunting.

**Spinning wheel**, a wheel driving a spindle which the women used in spinning yarn after it was "carded," i.e., made into loose strands with the cards.

**Trencher**, a wooden dish, something very common.

**Trundle-bed**, a low bed on wheels. It was run

under another bed in the day time and brought out at night. It was for the children.

**Turn of milling.** After mills were established, pioneers took wheat and corn to the mill to be ground for "bread-stuff". It probably was three bushels of wheat and three bushels of corn, but no definite authority can be found as to that. Some say it meant just half that much.

**Venison,** deer made into meat.

**Warping bars,** a frame having a large number of spools, used to get the "warp" or threads of even length before they were woven into a carpet or piece of cloth.

**Well-sweep,** a pole with a heavy end hung across the top of an upright fork in such a position that the weight of the heavy end would lift a bucket of water out of a well with the light end.

**Whip-saw,** a saw used by the pioneers in sawing lumber. The log was placed on a frame so that one man could get under and pull the saw straight down. Another man would then pull it up. Thus the process was continued something after the manner of using a cross-cut saw.



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